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DDI #3931-82
6 May 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of PFIAB Task Force: Current Intelligence
Support to the White House

1. In response to a request levied recently through the Executive Director's office, on 28 April I briefed PFIAB's Task Force on Science, Technology, and Communications on various aspects of the current intelligence support we provide to the President and his principal advisers. The informal discussion in Leo Cherne's office, originally scheduled for an hour, went from 1315 to 1445. Members attending for this period were William Baker, Task Force Chairman, Dr. Cherne, Edward Bennett Williams, and Professor Oettinger. PFIAB's Executive Director, Adm. Sagerholm, also sat in.

2. Mr. Baker opened by explaining that his group was charged, among other things, with examining the flow of intelligence support to the President, particularly in connection with crisis situations. He and his colleagues had been discussing current procedures for supporting the NSC with various Community officials and were specifically interested in learning how the Agency ensured that its product reached the principal customers in a timely and relevant way.

3. I responded by reviewing the steps taken in the past two years to make the PDB a more comprehensive and relevant daily summary and described the arrangements developed for this Administration whereby we provide daily one-on-one briefings for the PDB readers. I related in some detail how these briefings evolved out of the transition process and how we handle the morning sessions with Judge Clark, Secretaries Haig and Weinberger, and the Vice President. I stressed both the opportunity we have to expand on the PDB and tailor our support to individual officials and the benefit we derive in the form of information and guidance as a result of this direct access.

4. Mr. Baker said he and the other members wanted particularly to determine who in the White House was responsible for keeping the President informed through the day of spot developments related to material he had read in the PDB. Did the very limited distribution of the PDB raise problems in this regard? Without trying to answer for the White House, I offered some observations on the roles of Messrs. Clark, MacFarlane, and Poindexter and explained how we relate to the Situation Room, including our procedures for getting spot commentaries to White House customers as developments warrant. Baker also wanted to know how we related our intelligence information, as presented in the PDB, to information that

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the President presumably picked up from the press. At this point, Baker asked if it would be possible for them to look at a typical issue of the PDB to get a better sense of our approach. While noting the strict limits imposed by the President on readership of the PDB, I allowed as how this probably could be arranged on a single-sample basis. Neither Baker nor I pursued the question further, however, and there was no follow-up to this request.

5. Dr. Cherne showed some interest in the NID, specifically its timeliness and scope in comparison to the PDB. I noted the rough similarity of coverage (excepting highly sensitive items), but pointed out that the requirements for formal coordination of the NID combined with our effort to make the PDB more comprehensive and up-to-date often put the PDB in the lead nowadays.

6. Williams was curious about the length and format of the PDB. I described the various types of items we run and the average number of pages. He wondered whether a review of PDB coverage over a period of five to ten years would show (in a general way) how well CIA was performing. He and Baker hastened to add that they were not thinking in terms of post-mortems on specific substantive issues, but rather of an overall gauge of accuracy and effectiveness. I agreed that it was possible to evaluate individual products as one measure -- not a complete one -- of Agency performance, and confined the rest of my response to describing the DDI's intent in establishing the Product Evaluation Staff. There was no further discussion of this idea.

7. Professor Oettinger was primarily concerned to know how we ensured that feedback from the PDB readers was translated into guidance to collectors, both within the Agency and elsewhere in the Community. I explained how we try to keep the DCI and DDO informed of our customers' needs and how we make sure that the feedback is passed on to producing analysts who (hopefully) are in close touch with collection components inside and outside the Agency.

8. The four members followed the discussion with much interest and, at the end, appeared to be generally satisfied with what they had heard. I indicated that I would be ready to meet with them again if they wanted to pursue the discussion, but Baker did not seem to believe that would be necessary.

Assistant to the DDI for
Current Support

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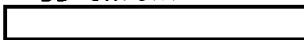
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